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OES FOR N. CARTER-FOSTER
DEPT FOR NEA/ELA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED ON BANNING TEXT MESSAGES WHILE
DRIVING

REF: STATE 6703

1.(U) Emboffs delivered ref demarche to Egyptian government officials on January 27 and 28. ESTHoff spoke to Ministry of Health Senior Advisor for International Cooperation Mokhtar Warida regarding the banning of text messages while driving. Warida noted that Egypt strongly supports the President's executive order and government officials attended the Moscow ministerial conference in November 2009. He also stated the Egyptian parliament passed legislation last year forbidding the use of mobile phones in any vehicle unless they are used in conjunction with a hand-free device. Warida acknowledged that the government has experienced difficulty in enforcing the legislation but noted police officers have the authority to fine and confiscate licenses when they encounter drivers violating the law.

12. (U) Econoff met with Dr. Hisham Fouad, Senior Advisor to Egypt's General Authority for Road Safety and Land Transport (GARBLT), within the Ministry of Transportation on January 28. Econoff previously discussed the President's Executive Order on distracted driving, and USG international steps on distracted driving with Dr. Fouad and with corporate members of a private sector Cairo road safety group in which Embassy has been active over the last year. Fouad, speaking for the GOE and private sector representatives present at the meeting, agreed that GOE had already recognized and taken legislative action on distracted driving but that, as in most issues related to traffic safety in Egypt, there are serious law enforcement shortcomings.

13. (U) Fouad said that, although GARBLT traffic safety statistics focus strongly on driver behavior (deemed by GARBLT to be responsible for more than 80 percent of Egypt's more than 12,000 annual traffic fatalities), such statistics do not distinguish between distracted driving or cell phone usage and other forms of driver behavior, such as excessive speed or erratic turns. Fouad promised to check whether there is any quantifiable measure by which Egyptian authorities track distracted driving as a distinct behavior, but he doubted this was the case.
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